

Request for Proposals for Fiscal Year 2021

Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grants

The North Carolina Division of Water Resources (DWR) is seeking proposals for award of federal fiscal year 2021 319(h) grant funds to implement watershed restoration plans that will help restore waters impaired by nonpoint sources of pollution. For FY 2021, North Carolina expects to receive **\$1.3 Million** from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for competitive funding of watershed restoration projects under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act.

Application Information

Eligible Applicants

- State and local governments (including Councils of Government)
- Interstate and intrastate agencies
- Public and private nonprofit organizations and institutions (including academic institutions)

In addition, all project sponsors must meet the following qualifications:

- Have a current Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. DUNS numbers may be obtained from the following website:
<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/index.jsp>
- Be registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM). The SAM registration website is <https://sam.gov/SAM/>
- Be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State. All project sponsors must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in the state of North Carolina. Registration with the Secretary of State may be completed via the following website:
https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/business_registration

How to Apply

The 319 grant application form and further information on the program can be found on the 319 [website](#). All applications must be submitted in electronic format as a Word document.

DWR will accept applications for FY2021 319 funding until **May 4, 2021**. Applicants may also submit a draft application no later than March 15, 2021 to obtain preliminary review and comments from DWR staff. Final applications shall be received by DWR no later than midnight May 4, 2021 (email to rishi.bastakoti@ncdenr.gov). Proposals received after this time will not be accepted.

Proposals will be reviewed by DWR staff and a Nonpoint Source Workgroup based on criteria listed on the 319 website. Selected projects will then be contracted at the time that DEQ receives its grant award from the US EPA.

Conditions for Funding Eligibility

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), DWR is seeking proposals **only** for projects that **implement a DWR-approved watershed restoration plan** to restore **impaired waters** impacted by nonpoint source (NPS) pollution.

Impaired waters are those listed as either Category 4 or 5 in either of the two most recent Integrated Reports published by the [DWR Modeling and Assessment Branch](#) (see link for Integrated Report Files). For this RFP, the 2016 and 2018 Integrated Reports are the two most recent. DWR will also consider proposals for waters included in Category 4 or 5 of the latest draft Integrated Report. The proposal must address parameter(s) in the IR listing and propose to implement goals and objectives of a DWR-approved Watershed Action Plan that includes the nine elements required by USEPA. When proposing a project, please reference the list of approved watershed plans on the [319 Grant Program website or obtain prior DWR approval for a new watershed restoration plan](#).

If you wish to implement a watershed restoration plan that is not on this list, you are required to submit your plan and [North Carolina 9-Element Plan Checklist](#) to rishi.bastakoti@ncdenr.gov by March 15, 2021. Division staff will then review the plan and determine whether it meets the nine elements. Further guidance on developing watershed plans is also available on the 319 Grant Program website.

Emphasis on Measurable Results

Both the U.S. EPA and North Carolina Division of Water Resources place a strong emphasis on achieving “measurable results” for projects selected to receive 319 Grant funding. To that end, projects should be sited as close to the impaired reach as possible to best target identified sources of water quality degradation. In addition, proposals involving on-the-ground implementation shall provide documentation assuring sustainable operation and maintenance measures for at least five years.

The EPA requires that projects designed to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment estimate the load reductions resulting from these projects. The 319 Grant Program recommends the following estimation methods:

Project type	Recommended Estimation Methods
Stormwater control measures designed to Minimum Design Criteria	EPA STEPL Tool Stormwater Nitrogen and Phosphorus (SNAP) Tool (formerly Jordan-Falls Stormwater Nutrient Load Accounting Tool)
Agricultural BMPs	NCANAT RUSLE2
Stream restoration	Various

Monitoring Requirements

319 proposals shall address an instream evaluation of project effectiveness. To maximize use of 319 project funds for on-ground implementation, DWR encourages practitioners to rely on and report relevant instream data produced by our, or other state-approved monitoring entities' existing monitoring programs to provide this instream evaluation of project effectiveness. The 9-element plan on which a 319 proposal is based is required to address the effectiveness evaluation, and the 319 proposal should reflect that plan. Thus, 319 proposals are not required to provide instream monitoring, but the 319 program strongly encourages siting projects above and close to existing monitoring locations in order to maximize potential for measurable gain. It should also be noted that some types of projects call for monitoring of site runoff.¹

All projects that propose a monitoring component must also submit Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs). QAPPs for selected projects must be reviewed and approved by DWR prior to the release of funds for monitoring activities; project budgets and timelines should account for the development and review of QAPPs accordingly. DWR has provided a [QAPP Template](#).

Use Support QAPPs are those that propose monitoring intended to inform DWR's impairment ratings for state waterbodies. Applicants seeking to write Use Support QAPPs should contact the 319 program for additional technical guidance. Below are some examples and guidance regarding QAPPs:

Example - [Hunting Creek Project QAPP](#) (DWQ Non-Use Support)

Example - [Lockwood Folly Project QAPP](#) (DWQ Use Support)

[EPA guidance for QAPPs](#)

¹ Stormwater control measures not designed to the Minimum Design Criteria (see state [Stormwater Design Manual](#)) should submit a monitoring plan as part of their 319 application.

Photo-Documentation

In addition, all funded projects should submit “before” and “after” photos in final reports to visually document changes due to project implementation, for instance of stream appearance after a rainstorm shown before and after project implementation, or stream pre- and post- fencing out livestock.

Certain Regulatory Compliance Activities Ineligible

Activities required by a draft or final NPDES permit, MS4 permit, Phase I and Phase II stormwater program requirement are ineligible. Eligible activities include aspects of Phase I and II programs that support but do not directly implement activities specifically required by Phase I or Phase II permits. Some eligible stormwater activities include best management practices for pollution prevention and runoff control not specifically required by a draft or final NPDES permit and stormwater projects occurring outside of the NPDES permit area. The 319 Grant will not fund a stream, wetland, or buffer restoration that is a compensatory mitigation requirement or any activities relating to compensatory mitigation; see [Federal Register 33 CFR 325](#) for additional definitions of such work.

Funding Availability

Contingent upon Congressional appropriation, funding for selected projects will be provided by federal fiscal year 2021 Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant funds. For planning purposes, we anticipate **\$1.3 Million** from the USEPA for competitive funding of watershed restoration projects for FY21. There is no maximum cap on the amount of funding that a project can apply for; however, we recommend that you make your project as cost-effective as possible. The majority of funded projects typically fall in a range from approximately \$50,000 to \$300,000.

Matching and Other Requirements

All projects must include non-federal matching funds of at least 40% of the project's total costs (i.e. match funds are at least 40/60 or 2/3 of the 319 award amount). Use the following formula to calculate the amount of non-federal match required for your project.
 $[(319 \text{ dollars requested})/.60] - (319 \text{ dollars requested}) = \text{required non-federal match}$

Note that providing more than the minimum 40% match is encouraged and adds weight in the review process.

All project match must: (1) relate directly to the project for which the match is being applied; (2) be reasonably valued; and (3) be supported by documentation. Match can be from private, state, local, or non-profit sources; it cannot be from federal sources or from funds already being used as a match for other federal grants. Any expenses

incurred before the agreement is fully executed, including applicant's expenses for preparing a proposal and final development of workplan, budget, and timeline, are not eligible for match. Match is an indicator of local commitment to a project and is considered in proposal eligibility and ranking. Match may include: (1) Cash Match (Cash contributed specifically to cover the actual cost of the project); (2) In-Kind Match (Contributions made directly in the form of services, resources or goods with dollar value specified to implement the project). Some examples of In-Kind Match services include: personnel/staff salaries and fringe benefits, professional fees, labor, supplies and materials, equipment, office/meeting space rent, office utilities, volunteer hours, structural design, outreach products and events, publications, indirect charges, public land conservation, etc.)

Applicants are also encouraged to identify other state funding sources for work that contribute to watershed improvement, and to partner with other state or local agencies, or with parties funded by those agencies, to leverage such funding or relationships to best effect for water quality improvement. Partnerships demonstrate a commitment from the community that projects will be maintained and have community buy in. Potential funding partners include the [Clean Water Management Trust Fund](#), North Carolina [Division of Mitigation Services](#), local Soil and Water Conservation District offices, or other state or federal NPS programs. See also a [list](#) of other watershed funding sources.

Disqualification

A proposal will be automatically excluded from consideration if:

1. The potential project sponsor's name appears on the recent "Suspension of Funding" list (SOFL) of the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). State agencies are prohibited from entering into new financial assistance agreements with these entities and should withhold funds not yet disbursed until the recipient has been removed from the SOFL.
2. The potential project sponsor has unresolved issues related to previous or ongoing 319 projects.
3. The potential project sponsor does not submit the project proposal by the specified deadline for submission.

Project Administration

As part of developing and finalizing a grant agreement for a selected project, DWR may request the applicant to modify the project scope of work based on comments received during project evaluations and the selection process. The grant recipient must enter into an agreement with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) to establish mutually agreeable terms for completing the project. Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis in accordance with the payment schedule and terms contained in the project agreement. Reimbursement is tied to performance targets. Grant recipients

will be required to provide quarterly progress reports to DWR. Projects are expected to be completed in the timeframe of the grant agreement. Time extension will not be granted without specific and appropriate justification, approved in advance. The 319 grant cannot reimburse for project work done outside the term or scope of the grant agreement, including prior to full approval of a grant agreement.

Deadlines and Administration

The schedule for reviewing and funding FY 2019 proposals is as follows:

February 8, 2021	Request for proposals (RFP) is released
March 15, 2021	Deadline for draft proposals or 9-Element Plans seeking preliminary staff review
May 4, 2021	Deadline for final proposals; must be received electronically by midnight
May 31, 2021	Applicants notified whether they will be invited for interviews
June 25, 2021	Interviews for finalists
July 2, 2021	DWR announces selected projects. Move forward with contracting, dependent upon receipt of EPA grant funding to North Carolina.
January 2022	Contracts executed, projects may start. (Estimated, depending on grant award date to NCDEQ and time for contract preparation.)

Unanticipated Program Changes

Information in this Call may be subject to change based on unforeseen changes to NC DEQ and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) priorities. If changes become necessary, DEQ will post the changes on the 319 Projects Program website.

Guidance for NPS Grants

The following web pages provide guidance and information for section 319 grant projects:

- [2014 \(current\) EPA Guidelines for Section 319 Grants](#)
- [Watershed Planning Guidance](#)
- [North Carolina's Nonpoint Source Management Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [Integrated Report \(2018\)](#)
- [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#)

Still Have Questions?

Please contact Rishi Bastakoti at rishi.bastakoti@ncdenr.gov. For information on required reporting if your project is selected for funding, see the [319 Grant Program website](#) for quarterly report and invoice templates and final report guidelines.